

**LEGISLATIVE
RESEARCH COMMISSION**

INTERIM REPORT

TO THE

1979

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SECOND SESSION, 1980**



**PUBLIC SCHOOL
DROPOUTS**

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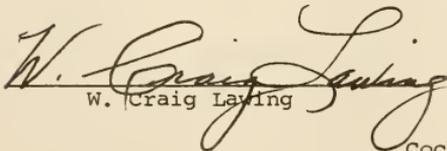
May 29, 1980

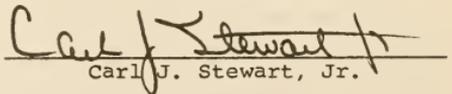
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 1979 GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SECOND SESSION, 1980

The Legislative Research Commission herewith reports to the 1979 General Assembly of North Carolina, Second Session, 1980 on the matter of Public School Dropouts. The report is made pursuant to Chapter 1039 of the 1979 Session Laws.

This report was prepared by the Legislative Research Commission Committee on Public School Dropouts, and it is transmitted by the Legislative Research Commission to the members of the 1979 General Assembly, Second Session, 1980, for their consideration.

Respectfully submitted,


W. Craig Laving


Carl J. Stewart, Jr.

Cochairmen

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Research Commission, created by Article 6B of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes, is authorized pursuant to the direction of the General Assembly "to make or cause to be made such studies of and investigations into governmental agencies and institutions and matters of public policy as will aid the General Assembly in performing its duties in the most efficient and effective manner" and "to report to the General Assembly the results of the studies made," which reports "may be accompanied by the recommendations of the Commission and bills suggested to effectuate the recommendations." G.S. 120-30.17. The Commission is co-chaired by the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and consists of five Representatives and five Senators, who are appointed respectively by the Cochairmen. G.S. 120-30.10(a).

At the direction of the 1979 General Assembly, the Legislative Research Commission has undertaken studies of twenty-four matters, which were arranged into ten groups according to related subject matter. (See Appendix A for a list of the Commission members.) Pursuant to G.S. 120-30.10(b) and (c), the Commission Cochairmen appointed committees consisting of legislators and public members to conduct the studies. Each member of the Legislative Research Commission was delegated the responsibility of overseeing one group of studies and causing the findings and recommendations of the various committees to be reported to the Commission. In addition, one Senator and one Representative from each committee were designated Cochairmen. (See Appendix B for a list of the Committee members.)

Ratified House Bill 409 (see Appendix C for a copy of Ratified House Bill 409) authorized the Legislative Research Commission to study (i) What are the causes of the high dropout

rate in North Carolina in grades 8 to 12; (ii) Why so many North Carolina high school graduates fail to continue their education beyond the high school level; (iii) What should and can be done to encourage students to remain in high school until they graduate; and (iv) What special factors, if any, have caused the dropout rate to be especially high in the western mountain counties comprising the Eighth Educational District, and what special solutions, if any, exist.

EVOLUTION OF THE DROPOUT

1. The student lacks the basic scholastic skills, reading, writing, speaking and computing and does not learn at a normal pace. His inability to learn at acceptable rates contributes to low achievement.
2. Low achievement is not rewarded and the lack of reward contributes to the students' dissatisfaction with school.
3. The student's need for success is not met by the school, and he turns to the other sources available for success and fulfillment.
4. The school and parents prevent the student from breaking away from a situation with which he cannot cope.
5. The student chooses to withdraw or stay away from school. He no longer has a feeling of acceptance or of self-esteem.
6. He develops an unfavorable attitude toward teachers and the school system.
7. Finally, he is a major problem for the school, his parents, and society.

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Committee on Public School Dropouts has met five times: an organizational meeting; one meeting at which speakers representing State departments and agencies and other organizations having contact with children appeared and made formal remarks; one meeting devoted primarily to consideration of "The Dropout Problem in North Carolina", a report prepared by the Department of Public Instruction at the request of the Committee; one meeting at which the Committee developed priorities concerning methods to aid in reduction of the dropout problem; and one meeting at which the interim report of the Committee was considered and approved.

At the initial meeting, the Committee reviewed the authorizing legislation and a 1974 subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education's Report on School Dropouts. That Report listed the following as factors contributing to the dropout problem: a poor or negative self-image by the student, an irrelevant curriculum, poorly developed reading and communication skills, a low motivation to learn, continual academic failure, discrepancy in backgrounds of teachers and students, inadequate training of teachers to handle a wide range of ability in their students, a real financial need on the part of some students to work, a lack of preparation prior to entering first grade for some children, parental fear and uncertainty in approaching the school, lack of cocurricular or aesthetic courses, failure to continue special education programs beyond the elementary level, and the need to modernize vocational programs.

A general discussion concerning the public school dropout problem was held. During the discussion the Committee was informed that the dropout rate in North Carolina is approximately eight percent. From that discussion the Committee acknowledged that there exists a problem of keeping students in school until graduation from high school. The Committee identified some of

the causes which contribute to the dropout problem and some of the services available which could aid in reduction of the dropout problem.

The Committee decided to invite persons having contact with the school age population to appear at the second meeting and present their views concerning the causes of and possible solutions to the dropout problem in North Carolina.

At the second meeting the Committee received testimony concerning the causes of and suggested solutions to the dropout problem from representatives of State departments and agencies, local school administrative units, and many other organizations and groups. (See Appendix D for the list of presenters.)

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that there are numerous factors which may contribute to students' decisions to discontinue their formal education prior to completion of the high school program and obtaining high school diplomas. Dropping out of school is not a cause; it is a symptom. It gives an indication as to where public school education is not responding to young people. Some of the factors which have been identified as contributors to students' decisions to drop out of school will be discussed individually as follows:

Lack of Basic Skills

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that many dropouts are borderline students. They are too high in ability to be classified and placed in educable mentally handicapped or educable mentally retarded classes but have difficulty achieving at the level where they are placed. Therefore, the students fall behind in the elementary grades and never catch up.

Many children do not learn because they are not taught. Some teachers decide very early which children will be successful and devote most of their energies to teaching the select students while largely ignoring the others.

A deficiency in the basic skills creates serious problems for the high school student. The inability to use properly the reading/language arts skills results in a lack of success in all high school subjects. These skills are necessary to pass the State and local requirements including the North Carolina Competency Test for graduation and receipt of a high school diploma. The resulting constant failure to succeed in school often lowers the student's self-image, produces negative behavior, and creates other personal and family problems.

Test results indicate that students in grades K-3 score at or slightly above the national average but something happens after third grade. The scores for grades 4-9 are not what they should be. Pursuant to the ninth grade test score results for the 1978-79 school term, as part of the Annual Testing Program, 26.5% of the students entering high school have severe deficiencies in the basic skills; 27.3% have scores in the bottom national quartile in reading and 25.1% have scores in the same quartile in mathematics. These students, due to their age, did not have the benefit of participation in the statewide Kindergarten and Primary Reading Programs.

Lack of Relevant Curriculum

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that some students do not respond positively to the traditional school program. Simply stated, the traditional school program does not meet the needs of some students. The structure of the high school program needs to become more flexible and needs to provide avenues through which that structure can meet the needs of the individual students. Sometimes the attitude of the State and local school administrators limits the flexibility of the high school program.

Some students have personal and economic needs which cannot be met through the tightly structured, traditional school program.

Unless alternatives and options to assist them in meeting these needs are made available, most often the students' only recourse is to drop out. Such options may include a modified instructional program, available vocational education programs, an opportunity to attend school after the regular school day, work-study programs, in-school suspension programs, self-contained classes, blocked classes, access to off-campus learning experiences including other institutional programs, and access to resource materials during the appropriate time of the day. It was the opinion of the presenter that an expansion of these options could impact significantly on the dropout problem in this State.

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that the Extended School Day Program has been most successful in getting students to continue their education after dropping out of the traditional school program and retaining some students who, except for this program, would drop out of school. This program is designed to serve young people 16 or older who have dropped out of traditional school programs, the potential dropout in the ninth grade and youth offenders. The program was initiated in 1970 with one site at Wilmington, North Carolina. To date, there are approximately 91 extended school day programs operating in 72 local school administrative units. These programs are funded from State, federal and local funds. Since its beginning approximately 10,000 students have graduated from extended school day programs. In 1979 more than 1,000 students were graduated through extended school day programs.

The Extended School Day Program is recognized by other names in various parts of the State such as Optional, Alternative, Redirect and Night High School. The settings are varied as some programs are in existing facilities while others have independent facilities.

The Program:

- offers each student the opportunity to work and go to school at the same time.
- provides for re-entry into the traditional day school program.
- provides for going into post-secondary education and employment.
- provides flexible hours of operation.
- maximizes creative curriculum design and application.
- encourages activities which are inter-related and relevant to the student's specific needs, interest, abilities and goals.
- leads to high school graduation.

Operation:

- during any combination of days.
- some programs operate three to four days per week rather than five; the average daily membership is adjusted accordingly.
- many students must work to support themselves and family; therefore, school is scheduled around the work day.

Graduation Requirements:

- requirements for high school graduation are the same as for the traditional school program.
- requirements for single units of credit are the same as for the traditional school program.
- individualized program for each enrollee.

Lack of Adequate Guidance Counseling

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that guidance counseling services made available to students attending the public schools in North Carolina are inadequate and that a well-organized and well-funded pupil personnel program is needed,

especially including elementary guidance counselors. Instructional support personnel positions are allocated on a ratio of one position for every 264 students. Currently, guidance counseling positions are included in the allocation of position for instructional support personnel. The actual guidance counseling positions are allocated to local school administrative units on a ratio of one position for every 400 students.

All students need counseling services to help build positive self-images, occupational awareness and appropriate behavior. Currently, students are alienated from school due to lack of identity with the school in general and more specifically a lack of identity with an adult who cares and is almost always available on a daily basis. The high counselor-pupil ratio does not permit the counselor to learn the individual student; therefore, the counselor is unable to adequately assist the individual student in planning his high school program.

Many students have personal and family problems which reduce their abilities to progress successfully in an academic environment. Sometimes these students experience continuing academic failure until by age 16 dropping out of school seems to be the only solution; sometimes these students exhibit disruptive behavior which sometimes leads to suspension or expulsion. After being suspended or expelled, some students never return to school to resume their education.

Some students drop out of school because they lack access to necessary funds to purchase adequate supplies for many items required in school. These students do not participate in the extra curricula activities offered during the school day and after school. As they reach junior high they become embarrassed because they do not have funds to purchase clothes acceptable to their peers; thus, these students become alienated from the general student population and often leave school prior to graduation.

The potential dropout is less likely to make an adequate assessment of his personal and educational needs to the broad range of educational opportunities available. As a result, his chosen high school program is often a maze of course selections which are unrelated to his needs and provide little relevance to his future educational goals and career plans. The student becomes frustrated with school and becomes a truancy problem as well as experiences academic failure in his selected courses.

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed a need for elementary guidance counselors. Many students who eventually drop out of school can be identified in the elementary grades. It is felt that if potential dropouts are identified early and placed in appropriate educational programs where they can experience academic success as well as be provided with appropriate counseling services, the number of students who eventually drop out of school at the high school level may be significantly reduced.

Need to Improve Professional Attitudes and Skills

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that school administrators and teachers need to be better informed of the needs and problems of the dropout and potential dropout students. That program employing the same concerns and comprehensiveness as those for other students with special needs should be developed and implemented for students who have been identified as potential dropouts.

Teachers and other appropriate school personnel should be provided with in-service training concerning factors which may lead to students' decisions to drop out of school. The in-service training should emphasize identification of potential dropouts and methods to employ which will encourage students to remain in school. Some principals and other school administrators do not follow policies and procedures relating to the appropriate legal method of suspending students from school. Practices

must be followed to insure communication between the school and parents so that students who are suspended or expelled from school do not become dropouts.

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that there is no prescribed curriculum at the university level designed specifically to develop training techniques in teachers which could prevent or decrease, or both, the dropout rate.

Social and Family Factors

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that many factors which contribute to students' decisions to drop out of school may be classified as social or family problems.

There is an established pattern by a portion of the adult population to utilize the welfare system which provides them with the essentials for a comfortable existence and results in an abundance of well-paying unskilled job opportunities for high school age students. As a result of the unskilled job opportunities coupled with the desire and need for money, many high school students drop out of school; many of their parents do not see the need for them to attend school beyond a basic education or the compulsory school attendance age. The educational level of parents has been identified as a major factor in students' attitudes toward school. Some students drop out of school at age 16 and become unemployed. They accept the life of welfare because it is an established practice.

Some students drop out of school because of drugs and related problems, pregnancy and related problems, legal problems, etc. (See Appendix E for a summary of identified causes and solutions to the dropout problem.)

From the information presented to the Committee, the Committee decided that the Extended School Day Program and additional guidance counselors at the elementary level would be two priority programs which could aid in reduction of the number of students who drop out of school.

At the third meeting, the Committee was presented the 1979 Juvenile Code Revision Committee's recommendations concerning the school's role in delinquency prevention. They are as follows:

- (1) That the State's school counseling program be standardized and expanded.
- (2) That the Department of Public Instruction foster greater coordination and cooperation between the public schools and the community colleges and technical institutes.
- (3) That the Department of Public Instruction emphasize career awareness in the early grades.
- (4) That parents be held more accountable for their child's school attendance.
- (5) That the Department of Public Instruction study the components of various in-school suspension programs and alternative school programs to develop models that may be used by public school systems throughout the State in developing alternatives to address those children with special needs.
- (6) That legislation be introduced to provide minimum standards for attendance counselors, to set a counselor-student ratio and to establish uniform salary ranges.
- (7) That the Department of Public Instruction incorporate into its junior high curriculum instruction on the law as it relates to juveniles.

The Committee was also informed of the concern that not much can be done to reduce the overall crime rate in North Carolina until something can be done to provide a more adequate education for our young people and to keep them in school longer. Too many of the inmates in prison and training schools today are school dropouts.

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed the existence of a new career and occupational information guidance and counseling service called North Carolina CHOICES. This service could be of value to educators in providing the needed occupational information to students. Presently, the service is being field tested in 19 sites and there are plans to make it available around the State.

The Department of Public Instruction presented the results of its study, The Dropout Problem In the Public Schools of North Carolina. The report contains information concerning how the number of dropouts is determined, why students drop out of school, current programs available to counteract the problem and solutions. (See Appendix F for a copy of the report.) The study revealed that approximately 8.0% of North Carolina's high school students dropped out of school during the 1978-79 school year.

The estimate was obtained by comparing the number of high school graduates in the 1978-79 school year with the ninth grade enrollment in 1975-76. The difference in the two figures is the unadjusted loss of students over the four-year period.

Next, the average annual combined effects of in-and-out migration, public and non-public school transfers, changes in non-promotion patterns, student deaths, and school system organizational changes were eliminated from the loss rates. This was accomplished by comparing the changes in the high school enrollment (grades 9-12) for each consecutive two year period over the last four years with the historical dropout patterns and the number of students who were non-promoted and returned to school the following year.

Finally, the loss rates which had been adjusted to eliminate all other causes of losses other than dropouts over the four-year

period were again adjusted to reflect increases or decreases in the current year's 1978-79 total high school enrollment to obtain the estimated annual high school dropout rate.

The Committee was informed that the statistical techniques described above have been refined through the years. At best it is a simple approximation of the actual rate based upon the best information available to the Department of Public Instruction. Expressed more simply, the above estimates indicated that approximately 32% of those students who enrolled in the ninth grade during the 1975-76 school year dropped out of school before completing their high school education.

The Report listed the following factors as the primary causes for students dropping out of school in North Carolina:

1. Lack of basic skills.
2. Need for more responsive school programs.
3. Need for employment.
4. Need for expanded vocational education programs.
5. Lack of adequate guidance counseling.
6. Need for improved professional attitudes and skills.

The Report listed the following as proposed solutions:

1. Strengthen instructional programs especially in the basic skills area in grades 4-6 by reducing the adult-pupil ratio.
2. Reduce the class size in reading/language arts and mathematics to 20-25 students per class and the daily load in these subjects to 100-125 students per day for grades 7-12.
3. Provide intensive instruction during regular and extended day hours in the basic skills for low achieving students in grades 9-12, especially those who scored in the bottom North Carolina quartile on the ninth grade achievement test.

4. Improve the guidance and support services in grades 9-12 so that each high school student would have an assigned student advocate at the school.
5. Expand vocational education programs to serve additional students.
6. Provide intensive training for reading/language arts teachers in grades 4-12 designed to improve their overall effectiveness in teaching all students, especially those who are low achievers and those who exhibit the early characteristics of the dropout.
7. Increase the number of students participating in the instructional activities programs of the secondary schools through additional State support for these programs.
8. Improve availability of textbooks and other appropriate materials and equipment for high school students.
9. Assure that every student is required to have an exit interview prior to their dropping out of school.
10. Carefully study the current statistical method of counting dropouts and consider the practicality of developing a student-based accounting system.
11. Develop an improved definition of dropouts taking into consideration the alternative methods of completing school and those students with an interrupted education.
12. Continue to cooperatively develop well-articulated programs between the public secondary schools and the Community College institutions.

After considerable deliberation the Committee tentatively decided to make the following recommendations concerning the dropout problem to the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980).

1. That funds be made available to provide one elementary guidance counselor in every elementary school in North Carolina.
2. That funds be made available to reduce the student-teacher ratio in the basic skills in grades 4-6 to strengthen the instructional program.
3. That funds be made available to provide two days for staff development at the beginning of the school term prior to commencement of classes.
4. That funds be made available to provide one Extended School Day Program in each local school administrative unit.

At the Committee's request, a letter containing these recommendations was addressed to Dr. Jerome Melton, Deputy State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction, requesting the cost of implementing each of these recommendations. The letter also contained four specific recommendations to the Department of Public Instruction. (See Appendices G and H for a copy of the above mentioned letter and a copy of the response.)

At the last meeting, the Committee was presented an explanation of the Department of Public Instruction's proposed Expansion Budget 1981-83. (See Appendix I for a copy of the proposed budget.)

The Committee was informed that the Department of Public Instruction's proposed budget includes a proposal that no special State funds be made available to local school administrative units for operating programs during extended school hours and that the 1,020 vocational months of employment presently

identified for the extended school day program be distributed on the regular formula; that every effort be made to acquire additional months of employment from the 1980 General Assembly; this would prevent any local unit from experiencing a decrease in months and the closing down of existing programs. The Committee discussed the Department of Public Instruction's tentative recommendations contained in its proposed budget.

Concern was expressed that if this proposal is adopted there may be a de-emphasis in the extended school day program at the local level.

After considerable deliberation the Committee made its recommendations concerning the dropout problem in order of priority as follows:

- (1) That the State Board of Education develop guidelines concerning problems related to school dropouts for local school administrative units to follow; that local school administrative units provide two days of staff development at the beginning of the school term prior to commencement of classes for teachers concerning problems related to school dropouts.
- (2) That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate twenty-two million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$22,500,000) to the State Board of Education to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio from 1:30 to 1:26 in grades 4-6.
- (3) That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session 1980) appropriate three million, four hundred thirty-eight thousand dollars (\$3,438,000) to the State Board of Education to provide 84 additional extended school day programs to make an extended school day program available for each local school administrative unit.

- (4) That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate sufficient funds to the State Board of Education to reduce the pupil-instructional support personnel ratio from 1:264 to 1:248. The Committee would like to see emphasis placed on guidance counselors because of the impact it feels they would have on the dropout problem.
- (5) That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate nineteen million, three hundred ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ten dollars (\$19,399,910) to the State Board of Education to expand basic skills instruction for low achievers in grades 9-12 to aid in the reduction of school dropouts.

CURRENT PROGRAMS

Testimony presented to the Committee has revealed that several programs currently operating in the public schools of the State are having a positive impact or have been designed to impact on the dropout problem. While some of these programs are yielding immediate results, others will not impact on the dropout rate for several years.

The State has now fully implemented a kindergarten program for all five-year-olds and will next year complete its funding of a statewide Primary Reading Program. Test scores indicate that both programs are paying dividends by resulting in improved test scores which rank at or slightly above the national averages in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades K-3. The impact of these programs on the dropout problem will not, however, be felt until these students reach 16 years of age.

North Carolina has also implemented an Annual Testing Program and a Competency Testing Program aimed at assuring that all students possess necessary basic skills. These test scores are not only a measure of the schools' success but also serve as a basis for curriculum planning and individual learning plans for students.

A requirement of the Competency Testing Program mandates that each student who fails the Competency Test or is identified as a probable failure receives remedial instruction. The remediation program has been highly successful and 97% of the 1978-79 senior class passed the Competency Test. It has further destroyed the myth that high school age underachievers will not and cannot learn their basic survival skills. It is interesting to note that during the first year of the Competency Testing Program there were 567 fewer dropouts than during the previous year.

Two programs funded through the Department of Labor have produced positive results. Diagnostic-prescriptive laboratories are in 59 high schools. Each lab is staffed with a teacher and two aides. These labs daily serve approximately 60 students who are experiencing extreme difficulty with their basic skills. A second program has provided 79 guidance counselors in Balance of State counties to work with potential dropouts and to provide the type of services previously described as needed for all high school students in North Carolina.

The most successful program which yields immediate results is the program for dropouts and potential dropouts operating during the extended school day. Since its beginning, approximately 10,000 students have graduated directly from the extended day programs.

Since 1970 the extended day programs have experienced considerable growth and success. They are aimed at recruiting students to return to public school and also at keeping in school identified potential dropouts. They provide vocational and academic instruction, place approximately 65% of the students in full-time or part-time employment while in school, and in many cases return students to the regular school day program.

In 1979, over 10,000 students enrolled in extended day programs and more than 1,000 of these graduated at the end of the 1978-79 school year. The program retains 60% of the school dropouts it brings back into the system while similar programs across the nation experience only a 35% success rate.

The in-school suspension program concept was endorsed by the State Board of Education approximately ten years ago. It provides an alternative to suspending students, who demonstrate disruptive behavior, from school for a definite period; instead such students are isolated from the regular student population where they continue their school work during the in-school suspension period. There are no State funds available for

operation of the in-school suspension program; the program is staffed by volunteers and locally paid personnel. However, most high schools in the State are practicing the in-school suspension concept.

North Carolina presently has one of the most comprehensive vocational education programs in the country. During the 1978-79 school year 343,708 students were enrolled in a variety of programs leading to post-secondary training and immediate entry into the job force. A new State Master Plan for Vocational Education has recently been approved by the State Board and should result in even broader program opportunities for students. Efforts are now being made to provide resources for an additional 85,000 students in these programs by 1983. There is also evidence that vocational offerings during the extended school day are growing across the State. These courses offered after school hours provide opportunities for additional students and also keep dropout-prone students in educational programs in lieu of less productive activities during the afternoon and evening hours.

Recent changes in State Board policies governing the secondary schools and the Community College institutions now provide for students to enroll in community colleges and technical institutes while enrolled in high school. This major change expands opportunities for students to have access to various programs not currently offered in their local schools. Access to these institutions will be especially helpful to students in small, rural high schools where vocational education opportunities are limited. These dual enrollment programs will result in better educational opportunities for students and are cost effective since they avoid duplication of facilities and equipment.

FINDINGS

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that North Carolina has a significant dropout problem.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that approximately 8.0% of North Carolina's high school pupils (or approximately 29,432 students) dropped out of school during the 1978-79 school year. Also, the Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that on the average more students in the rural sections of the State drop out of school than students in the urban sections of the State.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that the primary factors for students dropping out of school in North Carolina are: deficiencies in the basic skills; lack of adequate guidance counseling; need for a more responsive school program; and need for improved professional attitude and skills.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that there are numerous factors which may contribute to a student's decision to drop out of school. Many isolated factors may have a social, economic or education base but all of them can be grouped under the above general categories.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that students attending the public schools in North Carolina score significantly below the national average as evidenced by standardized tests results in the basic skills beginning with grade four. According to the test results of the 1978-79 school year, 26.5% of the students entering high school have severe deficiencies in the basic skills; 27.3% of these students scored in the bottom national quartile in reading and 25.1% scored in the same quartile in mathematics.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that the guidance and counseling services made available to students

in the North Carolina public schools are inadequate; the student-counselor ratio is too high, 1:400; and a severe shortage of elementary guidance counselors exists. Generally, the public schools of North Carolina do not have well-organized and well-funded pupil personnel programs.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated the need for a more comprehensive and flexible curricula in the public schools of the State. A substantial number of students do not respond in a positive manner to the traditional school curricula. These students do not respond in a positive manner to the traditional school curricula for numerous reasons including lack of motivation, lack of identification with the school environment, lack of relevancy in curricula with projected needs and goals of students and parents, and being inappropriately placed in programs which result in repeated frustration and failure.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated the need for improved professional attitudes, understanding, and skills of the administrators, counselors and teachers who work with students. The way the professional personnel interact with students has a significant effect on the dropout problem.

FINDING 1. The Committee has found that staff development programs need to be developed for training teachers concerning problems associated with, and identification of, the potential dropout and dropout students.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that many teachers need to become more aware of the dropout problem. They need to become more familiar with those factors which have been identified as contributors to the dropout problem and with students who possess those characteristics which have been identified with dropout or potential dropout students.

The Committee was also informed that no program at the university level exists designed to train teachers to deal with the dropout problem.

FINDING 2. The Committee has found that students attending the public schools of North Carolina begin to fall behind the national average at grade four as evidenced by test score results on standardized tests.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that students attending the public schools of North Carolina score slightly above the national average on standardized tests in grades K-3; that beginning at grade four, students attending the public schools of this State begin to fall behind the national average in the basic skills as evidenced by tests results.

A deficiency in the basic skills has been identified as a primary factor which contributes to students dropping out of school.

FINDING 3. The Committee has found that the Extended School Day Program has been most effective in retaining potential dropout students and recovering students who have already dropped out of school.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that the Extended School Day Program has been the most effective program in reducing the dropout rate in North Carolina.

The first Extended School Day Program began operation in 1970 in Wilmington, North Carolina; today, there are 91 Extended School Day Programs operating in 72 local school administrative units. The program retains approximately 60% of the school dropouts it brings back into the system.

During the 1978-79 school year over 1,000 students were graduated from Extended School Day Programs.

FINDING 4. The Committee has found that guidance and counseling services made available to students attending the public schools in North Carolina are inadequate due to the high counselor-student ratio.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that the counselor-student ratio is too high to provide effective counseling services to students attending the public schools of North Carolina. Currently, funds appropriated for guidance counselors are included in the funds allocated for instructional support personnel; the instructional support personnel-pupil ratio is approximately 1:264. The counselor-student ratio is approximately 1:400.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated that the potential dropout student is least capable of assessing his personal need and educational goals to the total educational opportunities available; often his chosen high school program consists of a collection of courses irrelevant to his personal need and educational goals which often results in repeated frustration, thus causing him to drop out of school. The counselor-student ratio is too high; therefore, the guidance counselor is unable to learn the individual student and help him plan a high school program where he can experience success.

FINDING 5. The Committee has found that many of the students entering high school have deficiencies in the basic skills.

The Committee has received evidence which demonstrated the need for more intensive instruction in the basic skills in grades 9-12. During the 1978-79 school term, as demonstrated by results of the Annual Testing Program, approximately 26.5% of the students entering the high schools in North Carolina have severe deficiencies in reading/language arts and mathematics; 27.3% of these students have scores in the bottom national quartile in reading and 25.1% have scores in the same quartile in mathematics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends:

1. That the State Board of Education develop guidelines for staff development concerning problems related to school dropouts for local school administrative units to follow; that local school administrative units provide two days of staff development at the beginning of the school term prior to commencement of classes for teachers concerning problems related to school dropouts.

The Committee has concluded that the attitude and teaching skills of teachers have a significant impact on the dropout problem. Teachers should be more informed of the factors which contribute to dropping out of school and be able to identify those students who exhibit those characteristics of potential dropouts. To equip teachers with the necessary skills to deal effectively with the potential dropout, the Committee recommends that staff development programs be made available to teachers at the local level. The Committee has been informed that to implement this recommendation will not require additional funds.

2. That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate twenty-two million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$22,500,000) to the State Board of Education to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio from 1:30 to 1:26 in grades 4-6.

The Committee has concluded that students attending the public schools of North Carolina scores are slightly above the national average on standardized tests in grades K-3; that beginning at grade four students attending the public schools of this State begin to fall behind the national average in the basic skills. To remedy this problem, the Committee has concluded that the teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced from 1:30 to 1:26 in grades 4-6. To implement this recommendation will

cost approximately \$22,500,000; therefore, the Committee also recommends that the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate approximately \$22,500,000 to the State Board of Education for implementation of this recommendation. (See Appendix J for a bill to implement this recommendation.)

3. That the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate three million, four hundred thirty-eight thousand dollars (\$3,438,000) to the State Board of Education to provide 84 additional Extended School Day Programs to make an Extended School Day Program available for each local school administrative unit.

The Committee has concluded that the Extended School Day Program has proven to be the most successful program employed by local school administrative units in this State in reducing the number of students who drop out of school and in recovering students who have already dropped out of school. Therefore, the Committee has concluded that this program should be expanded to make available at least one Extended School Day Program to each local school administrative unit.

The Committee has been informed that the State Board of Education has made a recommendation that no special funds be made available for the Extended School Day Program but it is the Committee's view that this program should be expanded and th special funds should be made available. (See Appendix K for a bill to implement this recommendation.)

4. That the 1981 General Assembly appropriate sufficient funds to the State Board of Education to reduce the pupil-instructional support personnel ratio from 1:264 to 1:248. The Committee would like to see emphasis placed on guidance counselors because of the impact it feels they would have on the dropout problem.

The Committee has concluded that adequate guidance and counseling services would have a positive impact on the dropout

problem; currently, the counselor-student ratio is too high to develop a counselor-student environment conducive to effective counseling. Therefore, the counselor-student ratio should be reduced.

5. That the 1981 General Assembly appropriate nineteen million, three hundred ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ten dollars (\$19,399,910) to the State Board of Education to expand basic skills instruction for low achievers in grades 9-12 to aid in the reduction of school dropouts.

The Committee has concluded that more intensive instruction in the basic skills for the lower achievers in grades 9-12 is needed and would have a positive impact on the dropout problem. Intensive instruction in the basic skills for the low achievers beginning at grade nine would increase the probability of more low achievers passing the high school competency test at grade eleven, thus, reducing the number of students who drop out of school because they are unable to pass the high school competency test. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980) appropriate additional funds to the State Board of Education to expand basic skill instruction for low achievers in grades 9-12.

The Committee has acknowledged that when decisions which influence the total school program are made for all students, adequate consideration must be given to the needs of the under-achievers and students possessing other characteristics of the potential dropout.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

House Speaker Carl J. Stewart, Jr. Cochairman	Senate President Pro Tempore W. Craig Lawing, Cochairman
Representative Chris S. Barker, Jr.	Senator Henson P. Barnes
Representative John Gamble	Senator Melvin R. Daniels, Jr.
Representative Parks Helms	Senator Carolyn Mathis
Representative John J. Hunt	Senator R. C. Soles, Jr.
Representative Lura S. Tally	Senator Charles E. Vickery

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Representative Lura S. Tally, LRC Member
Senator Dallas L. Alford, Jr., Cochairman
Representative Gordon H. Greenwood, Cochairman
Senator Fred D. Alexznder
Representative Gus N. Economos
Senator Rachel G. Gray
* Senator Rowe Motley
Representative Margaret Tennille
Mr. Phillip Timmons
Senator Marvin Ward

* Replaced Senator Fred D. Alexander who died.

APPENDIX C

Appendix C
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1979
RATIFIED BILL

CHAPTER 1039

HOUSE BILL 409

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION TO STUDY
THE PROBLEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUTS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is authorized to study (i) what are the causes of the high dropout rate in North Carolina in grades 8 to 12; (ii) why so many North Carolina high school graduates fail to continue their education beyond the high school level; (iii) what should and can be done to encourage students to remain in high school until they graduate; and (iv) what special factors, if any, have caused the dropout rate to be especially high in the western mountain counties comprising the Eighth Educational District, and what special solutions, if any, exist. The Commission may submit a report to the 1981 Session of the General Assembly.

Sec. 2. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified,
this the 8th day of June, 1979.

JAMES C. GREEN

James C. Green

President of the Senate

CARL J STEWART, JR.

Carl J. Stewart, Jr.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

APPENDIX D

Appendix D

PRESENTERS

- Dr. Gary T. Barnes, General Administration, University of North Carolina
- Mr. Jerry Beaver, Deputy Assistant State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction
- Mr. David Bennett, Youth Involvement Office, Department of Administration
- Dr. Larry J. Blake, President, Community Colleges
- Mrs. Pat Bullard, Executive Director, N. C. Social Services Association
- Mr. Al Capehart, Durham County Schools
- Mrs. Florence Corpening, Youth Energy Network, Winston, Salem, N. C.
- Mr. Charles Dunn, Child Watch
- Mrs. Kay Foley, Extended School Day Association
- Ms. Judy Gardner, Governor's Advocacy Council on Children and Youth
- Dr. Melvin Good, President, North Carolina PTA
- Mrs. Audry Hall, Senior Counselor, Reynolds High, Asheville
- Mr. John T. Henley, President, N. C. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- Mr. George Kahdy, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services, Department of Public Instruction
- Mrs. Joyce Kinnison, Executive Director, N. C. State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
- Ms. Linda Lindsey, Department of Community Colleges
- Ms. Anne Mackie, National Association of Social Workers, N. C. Chapter
- Mr. R. D. McMillan, General Administration, University of North Carolina
- Mrs. Bruce McSwain, President Elect, N. C. School Counselors Association
- Dr. Jerome Melton, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Mr. Don Morrow, North Carolina Association of Educators
- Mrs. Cheryl Posner-Cahill, President, N. C. School Counselors Association
- Mr. Jay Randall, President, North Carolina Principals/Assistant Principals Association

Mr. Raymond Sarbaugh, Executive Director, North Carolina Association
of School Administrators

Dr. Bettie Siegel, Dean, Western Carolina University

Mr. John Speas, North Carolina School Social Services Association

Mrs. Ann Tucker, President, North Carolina Personnel & Guidance
Association

Ms. E. Carole Tyler, Educational Information Center Program,
University of North Carolina

Mrs. Vandetta P. Wagoner, Executive Director, Youth Energy Network,
Winston-Salem, N. C.

Mr. Steven J. Williams, Chief Juvenile Court Counselor, Wake
County

Mr. Ken Wright, Department of Crime Control and Public Safety

APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
AND SUGGESTED METHODS TO AID IN RESOLVING THE SCHOOL
DROPOUT PROBLEM IN NORTH CAROLINA AS PRESENTED TO THE
LRC COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DROPOUTS ON DECEMBER 5, 1979

- I. Factors contributing to a student decision to drop out of school
- A. Student Attributes: Attitude toward school; past academic performance, particularly in the first three grades; vocational plans and congruence with the school's curriculum; student's self image in the context of the school; social and communication skills; involvement in school activities; physical and mental health; school attendance behavior; marriage or pregnancy; lack of child care facilities; belief by age 16 that the school has nothing interesting to offer; materialism; drugs and alcohol or their effect; youth unemployment; youth crime; and suspension and poverty.
- B. Family Characteristics: Parent's educational level; parent's occupational status; religious background; parental attitudes toward school; general economic condition of the family, need for additional income resulting in parental approval of the 16-year old student working; the degree of social isolation experienced by the family; an interaction effect between parental attitudes toward education and family cohesiveness; parental aspirations for the student; parenting today shows very little educationally sound role-making for students to follow; number of students today living in "unique" family settings - broken homes, abused and neglected, and foster care; permissive sexual attitudes and drug use of young adults and middle students; willingness of adult population to utilize a welfare system that provides the essentials for a comfortable income resulting in an abundance of unskilled well-paying job opportunities for high school age students; insufficient resources to provide for many of the necessities required by the school.
- C. Peer Characteristics: Peer attitudes toward school; academic performance of peers; vocational plans of peers; age of other members of the peer group; the degree of participation in school activities by members of the peer group.

- D. School Factors: Availability and use of counseling; curriculum orientation of the school; counselor/student ratio; student/teacher ratio; social composition of the student body; expenditure/student; amount of effort on the part of the school to prevent students from dropping out; retention and remediation policies of the school; interaction between the size of the school and course offerings; teacher attitude toward family structure; inadequate teacher training in area of developing a positive self-concept for students; inception of the North Carolina High School Competency Testing Program; inadequacies of money spent per child in different geographical locations in North Carolina; failure of students in grades K-3 to master the basic skills so that by age 16 they are so far behind that leaving school seems to be the only solution; lack of a well-funded and well-organized pupil personnel team, especially including elementary guidance counselors; lack of adequate instruction; irrelevant curriculum or curriculum beyond capabilities of student; inability of schools to provide appropriately for the needs of every pupil; lack of opportunity to participate in school related activities; school consolidation; lack of articulation and coordination among educational programs offered in the regular public schools and training schools; failure of school principals and administrators to follow appropriate policies and procedures to suspend students from school; lack of vocational, skill-related instruction in the middle grades; and transportation.

II. Methods to Aid in Retaining a Student in School:

A. School Program

1. Provide a strong alternative education program with flexible hours of operation: maximizing creative curriculum design and application; encouraging activities which are inter-related and relevant to the student's specific needs, interest, abilities and goals; offering each student the opportunity to work and go to school at the same time; lead to graduation, provide for re-entry into the regular school program; and provides for employment.
2. Provide an academically altered environment (in each school) staffed with a full-time teacher and a para-professional to teach students who need an interim place to be in the school when crisis occurs in the classroom or in personal life.

3. Interview potential dropouts to inform them of available alternatives and potential problems. Contact youth who have dropped out for an exit interview to:
 - (a) measure awareness of educational options
 - (b) inform of educational and job training options
 - (c) obtain perceptions of services received to date
 - (d) nurture involvement in other community services - option aiding personal goals achievement.
4. Increased provision for elementary school guidance and counseling programs directed toward the child who is likely to become a dropout. Some of these programs should be vocationally oriented.
5. Develop a well-coordinated evaluation of all preschool children with subsequent follow-up and provide remediation activities. Such a program should provide an adequate screening procedure for the early identification of problems which undetected could contribute to the individual's dropping out of school.
6. Develop a closer relationship between parents and the school through home visits by school personnel; Require cooperative education program planning for a child between parents and school personnel similar to the model presently being used with exceptional children.
7. Provide age-appropriate sex education programs in the public schools, grades K-12, so that youths will learn to "deal" with their sexuality, thus lowering the rate of young people who drop out of school because of unplanned pregnancies.
8. Provide a vocational education program in the elementary school to serve students including handicapped and disadvantaged who cannot experience success academically in other areas; provide a more comprehensive vocational program in the regular high school for those who must work and can only stay part time.
9. Increase availability of special programs at the secondary level for individuals who have already dropped out of school or those likely to drop out.

10. Make provision for extra-curricular and physical education activities so that students will not have to meet specific requirements that many cannot meet due to lack of income.
11. Require all schools to offer in-school internships and job survival credit courses.
12. Provide more programs through which high school dropouts may secure a diploma in Community Education Projects.
13. Develop an internal suspension system in all schools.
14. Develop job placement services and work experience programs.
15. Provide day care services.
16. Develop public relations and media programs (e.g. "Have you sent your child to school today?") directed toward parents of school age children.

B. School Personnel

1. Require in-service training for kindergarten, first, second and third grade teachers to help them identify and become more aware of potential dropouts. Additional in-service training should be required for middle school and junior high teachers to aid in developing programs for identifying and meeting needs of problem students and potential dropouts.
2. Develop at the university level a teacher education program that specializes in the educational needs of disadvantaged students and the teacher training techniques concerning identification of potential dropouts, potential causes of the problem, and ameliorating strategies.
3. Provide a well-funded and well-organized pupil personnel team, especially including elementary guidance counselor.
4. Inform principals and school administrators of the appropriate policies and procedures to follow when suspending pupils.

C. General Assembly

1. Include a dropout-poverty factor in allocation of education funds for public schools.
2. Increase the AFDC payments to keep pace with inflation so that families receiving AFDC payment may be able to purchase materials needed for school.
3. Decrease class size.
4. Improve coordination of all public services available to youth.
5. Remove age barriers so that youth under 18 can participate in community college and technical institute programs as well as apprenticeship training programs offered through the Department of Labor.
6. Include youth as members of advisory and policy boards and commissions.

THE



APPENDIX F

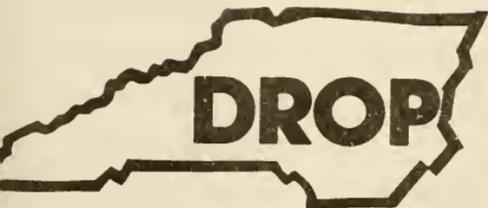
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THE



PROBLEM

IN THE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

JANUARY 1, 1980 RALEIGH, NC

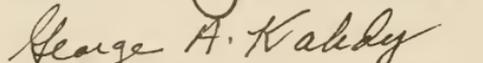
THE DROPOUT PROBLEM
IN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

This report represents an effort by the Instructional Services Area of the State Department of Public Instruction to identify the extent, causes, and solutions to the dropout problem in our State. This problem results in the loss of approximately 30,000 students from our schools each year.

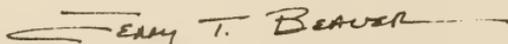
Many excellent programs which are now impacting on the problem have been implemented in our schools during recent years. These programs have been primarily responsible for the decrease in the dropout rate from 13.7% in 1956 to 8.0% in 1979. The responsibility of the schools is to continue that trend and to drastically reduce the number of dropouts as quickly as possible. This will happen when there is a cooperative commitment on the part of educators, lay citizens, and others interested in the education of children to provide the necessary attitudes, creativity, and resources to accomplish the task.



A. Craig Phillips, State Superintendent
State Department of Public Instruction



George A. Kahdy, Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services Area



Jerry T. Beaver, Deputy Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services Area

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DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF DROPOUTS

An estimated 8.0% of North Carolina's high school pupils (or approximately 29,431 students) dropped out of school during the 1978-79 school year. The figures were estimated from information supplied to the Department of Public Education by local school principals throughout the state. Because a significant number of students drop out during the summer months when school is not in session, the annual dropout rate must be estimated.

The estimates were obtained by first comparing the number of high school graduates in the current year (1978-79) to the ninth grade enrollment four years earlier in 1975-76. The difference in the two figures is the unadjusted loss of students over the four year period.

Next, the average annual combined effects of in-and-out migration, public and non-public school transfers, changes in non-promotion patterns, student deaths, and school system organizational changes were eliminated from the loss rates. This was accomplished by comparing the changes in the high school enrollment (grades 9-12) for each consecutive two year period over the last four years with the historical dropout patterns and the number of students who were non-promoted and returned to school the following year.

Finally, the loss rates which had been adjusted to eliminate all other causes of losses other than dropouts over the four year period were again adjusted to reflect increases or decreases in the current year's 1978-79 total high school enrollment to obtain the estimated annual high school dropout rate.

The statistical techniques described above have been refined through the years. At best they have simply approximated the actual rate based upon the best information available to us. Expressed more simply, the above estimates indicated that approximately 32% of those students who enrolled in the ninth grade during the 1975-76 school year dropped out of school before completing their high school education.

Care should be taken in comparing North Carolina's estimated annual high school dropout rate to those of other states. Wide variations exist among the states in the methods used to calculate dropout rates, and any comparison to other states should be made only with a full and complete

understanding of the statistical methods used to arrive at the published rates.

The procedures previously described illustrate vividly the problems encountered in determining the actual number of dropouts. In addition to those mentioned in the formula, no consideration is given to those students who become 16 years of age and drop out prior to enrolling in the ninth grade. Likewise, students who complete requirements and are allowed to graduate one year early are not counted as graduates.

The problem is also complicated by the cumbersome pupil accounting system which encourages human error. For example, evidence exists that many students who enroll in extended day programs are shown incorrectly as dropouts from the regular day program. Also, many students who drop out of school and reenter two or more times during the same school year are counted as dropouts each time they leave school. The present system in order to even approach accuracy requires meticulous attention to detail and follow-up. Under the stress of administering the high school, there is little time for adequate attention to this type of detail.

An accurate reporting system is realistic only when statistical data is based on individuals and not on groups. Due to in-migration, out-migration, non-promotions, early graduations, and other factors, there is no fixed group of students. The City of New York is presently developing a student data base which should make a more accurate reporting system possible. This type of base normally uses student identification numbers and sophisticated tracer techniques. The obvious question for the North Carolina Schools is one of cost effectiveness. Should such a system clarify the unknown factors related to the dropout problem and, more importantly, provide better potential for follow-up procedures aimed at returning students to school, the cost would easily be justified.

As the dropout problem is viewed statistically, it is equally important to address the question of definition. At what point is the student considered permanently separated from the school?

A number of students over 16 years of age leave the secondary schools each year and upon approval by their respective superintendents or after having been out of school for six months are allowed to enroll in the Community College System to continue their education. During the 1978-79 school year 2,339 such students were enrolled in either the GED or

Adult High School Diploma programs. Are these students dropouts or are they simply having their educational needs met in a different way?

The June 6, 1979 report made to the State Board of Education by the Community College System indicated that 552 civilian students under age 18 completed the GED requirements and were issued a High School Equivalency Certificate during the 1978-79 school year. Are these students to be considered dropouts or did they simply complete their high school education in another way?

Another question of definition relates to G.S. 115-163(1) which clearly identifies the purpose of the public secondary schools as providing educational opportunities to all persons until their twenty-first birthday. Is the student who leaves school for one year and returns to complete his graduation requirements a dropout? Or, has this student participated in what has recently been labeled "interrupted education"?

The present system of dropout accounting tends to be regressive. Through a concentrated effort at both State and local levels, a large number of dropouts are returned to school each year. These students tend to experience a much higher dropout rate than those students who have not dropped out the first time. The net effect is that the greater the number of students recaptured by the public schools, the greater the number of dropouts and the higher the dropout rate.

These examples and questions indicate (1) that in order to count dropouts, a definition must be agreed upon and (2) that such a count is only possible when it is designed around an individual student base.

WHY STUDENTS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

A number of studies exist both within North Carolina and in other states which identify the causes of dropouts. These studies generally agree on the basic factors contributing to the dropout problem but disagree as to their rank of importance. They all agree that a deficiency in the basic skills, poor attendance, lack of parental support, poor self-image, need to work, health problems, and lack of advocacy are major contributing factors.

A recent citizens survey conducted by the Division of State Budget and Management indicated that the need for employment, family problems, and lack of interest in school were primary reasons for dropping out of school. Other reasons given included marriage, pregnancy, and low academic achievement.

Another N. C. study completed by a legislative subcommittee in 1974 listed negative self-image, irrelevant curriculum, and poor basic skills as the most frequently cited causes. Other causes listed in their report included a discrepancy in the background of teachers and students and inadequate training of teachers to handle a wide range of ability in their students.

The New York City study completed in October, 1979 reveals that students drop out for a variety of reasons which include academic failure, boredom or lack of motivation, feelings of alienation, personal or home problems, behavior problems, and language difficulties. Findings from the study also suggest "that the school system itself contributes to the dropout problem by not making enough efforts to respond to the student who is vulnerable to dropping out." It is also concluded in the study that dropout prone students could succeed in school if their personal and instructional needs were met, including learning strategies designed around their specific needs and their learning styles.

A parallel study concludes that the older the student upon entry into high school, or the less equipped with basic skills, the greater the student's chance of dropping out. It is also determined in that report that almost 100% of the students who were below grade level on standardized math and reading tests by a combined total of more than seven years dropped out of school. Both formal and informal research tells us that the atti-

tudes of school systems and their staffs have a direct correlation to their success in retaining students in school. A recent report to the State Board of Education describes the structure of the comprehensive high school and its environment as a primary factor in determining the school's capacity to respond effectively to all the needs of its students. That structure includes not only written policies and regulations but also the attitudes which dictate the day to day management and decision making which affects its students.

It is quite obvious that there is no single reason for school dropouts. Students exit school prematurely as a result of multiple factors, each one intensifying the others. It is believed that the following factors are the primary causes of students dropping out of the public schools in North Carolina.

1. Lack of Basic Skills. A deficiency in the basic skills creates several serious problems for the high school student. The inability to properly use the reading/language arts and mathematical skills results in a lack of success in all high school subjects. These skills are necessary to pass the State and local course requirements in order to graduate. A severe lack of these skills results in an inability to pass the N. C. Competency Test. The resulting constant failure to succeed in school lowers the student's self-image, produces negative behavior, and creates other personal and family problems.

Based on the ninth grade test scores given during the 1978-79 school year as part of the Annual Testing Program, 26.5% of the students entering high school have severe deficiencies in reading/language arts and mathematics. 27.3% of these students have scores in the bottom national quartile in reading and 25.1% have scores in the same quartile in mathematics. These students, due to their age, did not have the benefit of participation in the statewide Kindergarten and Primary Reading programs. They are now attempting to successfully pass high school level courses, graduate from high school and be productive citizens without the skills necessary for these achievements.

This primary cause of dropouts reflects the critical need for keeping these students in school and providing for them intensive instruction in the basic skills. It also reflects the need for improved basic skills instruction for identified students in grades 4-8.

2. Need for a More Responsive School Program. A large number of high school age students have personal and economic needs which cannot be met through the tightly structured, traditional school program. Unless alternatives and options which assist them in meeting these needs are available, most often the students' only recourse is to exit school. Such options would include a modified instructional program, available vocational education programs, an opportunity to attend school after regular school hours, work-study programs, in-school suspension programs, self-contained or blocked classes, access to off-campus learning experiences including other institutional programs, and access to resource and study materials during the appropriate time of day. A recent study entitled "High School Articulation Report," also in New York City, found that applicants who are admitted to educational options and vocational/technical schools are less likely to drop out than their counterparts who do not have access to these programs.

An expansion of these several options, especially instructional programs during the extended day, would impact significantly on the dropout problem in North Carolina.

3. Need for Employment. The need for employment and the sense of independence which comes through that employment is a strong force directing the day to day decisions of the young adult. This need for money is becoming increasingly significant in a time of rampant inflation and as more and more single parents strive to meet their economic demands. The felt need for acceptable clothing, spending money, and transportation is also vitally important to the high school age student.

This factor again reinforces the demand for additional optional programs which allow the student to earn money and at the same time continue his/her educational program aimed at graduation. It also reinforces the critical demand for additional counselors to assist students in making proper value judgments concerning the importance of school completion and the various options available which are not in conflict with the need for an earned income.

4. Need for Expanded Vocational Programs. As indicated in the previously mentioned report, participation in vocational training programs is a strong deterrent to school dropouts. This is true for a variety of reasons.

Due to consistent failure in a traditional, academically oriented curriculum, the dropout-prone student finds it increasingly difficult to relate the school program to his/her survival needs. A broad range of vocational courses provides opportunities for students to be successful in less academically challenging courses, experience success, and identify his/her training with job placement and earned income.

Cooperative work-study programs provide a relief from the structured school environment for a portion of the students' day, provide them with immediate income, prepare them for immediate entry into the job force, and provide relevancy by exposing them in many ways to all facets of the world of work.

It is further observed in North Carolina that students with acute discipline problems tend to reduce or eliminate those problems when placed in vocational education programs. Since the lack of proper discipline is another contributing factor to dropouts and since vocational programs tend to improve discipline, there is even greater evidence for the need of expanding these programs.

It is estimated that an additional 85,000 students in the secondary schools of North Carolina need and desire vocational programs which are unavailable to them.

5. Lack of Adequate Guidance Counseling. Except for the improvement of achievement in the basic skills of language arts and mathematics, the need for an adequate guidance and counseling program looms as the major cause of students leaving school prior to graduation.

The dropout-prone students are least likely to give sufficient consideration to relating their personal and educational needs to the broad range of educational opportunities available. As a result, their four-year program is too often a maze of course selections which are unrelated to their needs and provide little relevance to their future educational and career plans. These students then become disenchanted with school and experience truancy problems as well as failure in their selected courses. There is greater need for counselors to provide with the help of parents and students an appropriate four-year educational program for each individual student.

Under the present system students are also alienated from the school due to a lack of identity with the school in general and more specifically a lack of identity with an adult who cares and is always available on a

day to day basis. The need for advocacy to assist these students with the resolution of their day to day problems is of paramount importance. Such advocacy makes it possible for the students to have an intercessor between themselves and the school, the teacher(s) and the parents at times when they feel unable to resolve conflict situations on their own.

The advocacy role of the counselor needs to also include a daily monitoring of attendance patterns and grades to allow for early intervention and correction of related problems before these problems become insurmountable.

Of equal importance, additional counseling time is required for establishing short and long range goals which are both realistic and challenging. These goals include completion of school, career planning, and others related to personal and family needs. It is also often necessary for counselors to contact other community agencies for assistance and in some instances find immediate employment for students.

The present-counselor pupil ratio will not provide for such services to students and unless corrected the lack of these services will continue to be a major contributing factor to the dropout problem in North Carolina.

6. Need for Improved Professional Attitudes and Skills. The attitudes, understandings, and skills of the administrators, counselors, and teachers who work with students each day are significant factors in the dropout problem and encompasses all other factors. These persons must first of all recognize the seriousness of the problem and then muster the attitudes and skills necessary to attack the problem.

Decisions which mold the total school program must be based on an attitude that schools are for all students and that they must be especially reactive to the needs of underachievers and students possessing the other characteristics of the potential dropout. That attitude then manifests itself in a school structure which becomes less rigid and more responsive to students' needs.

Positive attitudes, however, must be accompanied with an understanding of potential program and policy alternatives. Simply put, the school recognizes the necessity of organizing for every student and providing meaningful and relevant programs for diverse student populations. Such programs might include provision for early graduation, special preparation for the GED, improved scheduling of work-study students, operation of libraries during afternoon and evening hours, adjustment programs, internships, apprentice-

ships, credit by examination, double period scheduling, self-contained and block classes, and expanded instructional programs after normal school hours.

Staff development activities for school administrators aimed at attitudinal and program skills would be beneficial to the entire student population and especially to the potential dropout.

The 1974 legislative committee on dropouts identified the discrepancy in the backgrounds of teachers and students and inadequate training of teachers in handling a wide range of student needs as factors contributing to the schools' inability to retain students. In 1965, Dr. Docia Zavitkovsky, Supervisor in the Santa Monica Unified School District, in a NEA study entitled "Prevention of Failure" includes a list of abilities necessary for teachers. This list includes the following:

1. Recognition of the cultures from which children come, the ways in which children from each cultural background are alike and different, and the influence of the particular culture on how a child perceives and responds to school experiences.
2. Knowledge of the dynamics of human growth and development as a basis for understanding and accepting the child and for adapting expectations to each child's uniqueness.
3. Skill in imaginative teaching designed to make learning a positive experience for the child who is not motivated to learn because of successive and frustrating encounters with failure.
4. Acceptance of the teachers' responsibility to build a rapport despite the child's handicapping attitude toward school, to utilize every means that makes learning easier for the child, and to persist in methods designed to stir his interest in learning.

The public schools of North Carolina must continue to expand staff development opportunities for teachers which will assist them in better understanding the profile and characteristics of the underachiever and in meeting the unique and instructional needs of these students. This is especially true in the basic areas of language arts and mathematics.

Staff development on attitudes and instructional skills are only a partial solution to the problem. Teachers must also be given small enough classes in order to devote proper attention to each pupil's individual needs.

PROFILE OF THE POTENTIAL DROPOUT

The primary causes of dropouts give us clearly defined characteristics by which the potential dropout can be identified. An awareness of these characteristics makes early identification possible and should trigger early intervention strategies designed to prevent the students from dropping out of school. These include:

1. Consistent regression in achievement resulting in two or more years below grade average.
2. Grade placement two or more years below normal grade placement.
3. Irregular attendance beginning in middle grades and becoming more pronounced during secondary years.
4. Disinterest in school and school-related activities.
5. Family problems and poor school-home relationships.
6. Negative self-image.
7. Negative behavior patterns beginning in middle grades.
8. Non-participation in extracurricular activities.

CURRENT PROGRAMS TO COUNTERACT THE DROPOUT PROBLEM

The public school system in North Carolina has made great strides in recent years. Many of the programs implemented during that time will impact directly on the schools' ability to retain students. While some of the programs are yielding immediate results, others will not impact on the dropout rate for several years.

The State has now fully implemented a kindergarten program for all five-year-olds and will next year complete its funding of a statewide Primary Reading Program. Test scores indicate that both programs are paying dividends by resulting in improved test scores which rank at or slightly above the national averages in reading/language arts and mathematics. The impact of these programs will not, however, be felt until these students reach 16 years of age.

North Carolina has also implemented an Annual Testing Program and a Competency Testing Program aimed at assuring that all students possess necessary basic skills. These test scores are not only a measure of the schools' success but also serve as a basis for curriculum planning and individual learning plans for students.

A requirement of the Competency Testing Program mandates that each student who fails the Competency Test or is identified as a probable failure receives remedial instruction. The remediation program has been highly successful and 97% of this year's senior class has passed the Competency Test. It has further destroyed the myth that high school age underachievers will not and cannot learn their basic survival skills. It is interesting to note that during the first year of the Competency Testing Program there were 567 fewer dropouts than during the previous year.

Two programs funded through the Department of Labor have produced positive results. Diagnostic-prescriptive laboratories have been placed in 59 high schools and each lab is staffed with a teacher and two aides. These labs daily serve approximately 60 students who are experiencing extreme difficulty with their basic skills. A second program has provided 79 guidance counselors in Balance of State counties to work with potential dropouts and to provide the type of services previously described as needed for all high school students in North Carolina.

The most successful program which yields immediate results is the program for dropouts and potential dropouts operating during the extended

school day. Since its beginning, approximately 10,000 students have graduated directly from the extended day programs.

Since 1970 the extended day programs have experienced considerable growth and success. They are aimed at recruiting students to return to public school and also at keeping in school identified potential dropouts. They provide vocational and academic instruction, place approximately 65% of the students in full-time or part-time employment while in school, and in many cases return students to the regular school day program.

In 1979, over 10,000 students enrolled in extended day programs and more than 1,000 of these graduated at the end of the 1978-79 school year. The program retains 60% of the school dropouts it brings back into the system while similar programs across the nation experience only a 35% success rate.

The results of these programs have been impressive for several reasons. They provide opportunities for the students to work during the day and meet their graduation requirements during the evening hours. The instructional programs are tailored to meet the individual needs of the students at each local site of operation. Students also receive counseling services and job placement services provided through a low pupil-staff ratio. The learning environment in these programs is much more flexible and informal than that normally found during the regular school day. Staff members working in these programs are caring, well trained professionals who believe in their students and, perhaps more importantly, believe that their students can learn.

There are approximately 72 local school systems providing these programs during the extended day at 91 locations involving 150 high schools. The total expenditure for these programs during the present school year is approximately \$9,500,000 or \$950 per student enrolled. It is interesting to note that at many of these sites the total taxes paid by these working students amounts to a sum greater than the per student cost.

Programs during the extended day are funded through local, state, and federal dollars utilizing primarily state-allotted ADM positions and vocational months of employment. Additional school systems have sought to begin these programs but have had insufficient funds to implement them. This proven approach to the dropout problem has potential for expansion across the state and all measures should be taken to ensure additional financial support for their expansion.

The State Board of Education recently approved policy changes which will provide for expansion of these programs for all students in the high schools of North Carolina. This expansion will, hopefully, result in a broad range of course offerings for students of all achievement levels and is in keeping with statewide efforts to make the high schools more flexible.

North Carolina presently has one of the most comprehensive vocational education programs in the country. During the 1978-79 school year 343,708 students were enrolled in a variety of programs leading to post-secondary training and immediate entry into the job force. A new state Master Plan for Vocational Education has recently been approved by the State Board and should result in even broader program opportunities for students. Efforts are now being made to provide resources for an additional 85,000 students in these programs by 1983. There is also evidence that vocational offerings during the extended school day are growing across the State. These courses offered after school hours provide opportunities for additional students and also keep dropout-prone students in educational programs in lieu of less productive activities during the afternoon and evening hours.

Recent changes in State Board policies governing the secondary schools and the Community College institutions now provide for students to enroll in community colleges and technical institutes while enrolled in high school. This major change expands opportunities for students to have access to various programs not currently offered in their local schools. Access to these institutions will be especially helpful to students in small, rural high schools where vocational education opportunities are limited. These dual enrollment programs will result in better educational opportunities for students and are cost effective since they avoid duplication of facilities and equipment.

Finally, a special Task Force on Secondary Education in 1974 produced a series of recommendations entitled "Channels for Changing Secondary Schools." These recommendations have served as a basis for decisions aimed at improving the effectiveness of secondary schools during the past five years. They have recently been updated to reflect the changing needs of our schools and new priorities reflect the need for improvements which directly impact on the dropout problem. Together, with the results of this study, they serve as a basis for the recommendations which follow.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

As stated earlier, there is no single cause of school dropouts. Students exit school due to multiple factors, each one reinforcing the others. For this reason, any proposed plan to reduce the dropout rate should attack all of the primary causes. The following proposed solutions are in direct response to the causes of dropouts in the public schools of North Carolina as identified in this report and should, therefore, be considered as a part of future State-level planning and budget preparation.

1. Strengthen instructional programs especially in the basic skills areas in grades 4-6 by reducing the adult-pupil ratio. Improved instruction at these levels is required in order to build upon the solid foundation now in place through the Kindergarten and Primary Reading Programs and in order to establish earlier intervention for students with identified weaknesses prior to their entrance into the secondary school program. Additional staff at grades 4-6 would contribute significantly to the improvement of standardized test scores in reading/language arts and mathematics, and would eventually reduce the number of high school students having severe deficiencies in the basic skills. These deficiencies are one of the major contributing factors to public school dropouts.
2. Reduce the class size in reading/language arts and mathematics to 20-25 students per class and the daily load in these subjects to 100-125 students per day for grades 7-12. The improvement of the class size and daily load in these basic skills areas would result in more individualized instruction for over 500,000 students. These improved ratios would significantly improve the 7th and 8th grade teachers' efforts to (1) continue the developmental program for all students and (2) give special attention to the identified weaknesses of individual students. The ratios would also improve the performance of high school students as measured by the Annual and Competency Testing Programs.
3. Provide intensive instruction during regular and extended day hours in the basic skills for low achieving students in grades 9-12, especially those who have scored in the bottom N. C. quartile on the 9th grade achievement test. Deficiencies in the basic skills result in a lack of success in all high school subjects, create a negative self-concept, and are

a proven factor in encouraging students to exit school. Additional resources to provide for the supplementary programs would allow for the expansion of extended day courses, support basic skills instruction through in-school suspension programs, and make available a number of optional instructional programs to these low achieving students.

4. Improve the guidance and support services for students in grades 9-12 so that each high school student would have an assigned student advocate at the school. In order to accomplish this proposal, a counselor-pupil ratio of 1:200 would be required. The present ratio is 1:400. Improved counseling and support services would be of assistance to students in preparing their four-year program plan, monitoring that plan on a day-to-day basis, and in assisting them in career counseling and job placement. The need for additional guidance services is second only to improved basic skills instruction as a major cause of school dropouts.
5. Expand vocational education programs to serve additional students. Since vocational programs tend to improve the holding power of the public schools and also impact on the discipline problem in the schools, no student should be denied access to these programs. Large numbers of students are now turned away from vocational programs due to the limitations of staff and facilities. Vocational programs also tend to give direction and hope to the dropout prone students and this renewed direction often improves overall school performance. Expanded vocational resources could also be used to fund additional extended day programs.
6. Provide intensive training for reading/language arts teachers in grades 4-12 designed to improve their overall effectiveness in teaching all students, especially those who are low achievers and those who exhibit the early characteristics of the dropout. This staff development should include not only training in content, but also training in methodology which recognizes the necessity of adapting teaching techniques to the diverse abilities of students. Such staff development provided in the Kindergarten and Primary Reading Programs has played a major role in improving student performance at those levels.
7. Increase the number of students participating in the instructional activities programs of the secondary schools through additional state support for these programs. A major part of the secondary school program for students is involvement in instructional activities. Students often do not partici-

pate in these due to the costs involved and due to the lack of available teachers to supervise these activities. The State should give every consideration to a per student allocation which would reduce the students' costs and which would provide an incentive for teachers to work additional hours supervising these activities. Numerous studies indicate that students who are not involved in the full life of the school program are more prone to drop out.

8. Improve the availability of textbooks and other appropriate instructional materials and equipment for high school students. There presently exists a significant differential for funding of these resources between the wealthier and poorer school systems across the State. Present State allocations, especially for secondary textbooks, has resulted in a decrease in curriculum planning, fewer program options, and a more rigid high school curriculum. Parents are critical of the system which requires students to do home study and does not provide books for this purpose. The acute shortage of textbook funds has also required that local schools use outdated instructional materials and this is unusually critical in social studies and science where content must change during short periods of time.
9. Assure that every student in North Carolina is required to have an exit interview prior to their dropping out of school. The Division of Pupil Personnel Services should consider the development of a proper format for the exit interview which would (1) encourage students to remain in school, (2) assist the students in considering alternatives to their instructional programs and (3) would inform the students of all available options including extended day programs. Where the exit interviews fail to retain students in school, clearly defined follow-up procedures should be established.
10. Carefully study the current statistical method of counting dropouts and consider the practicality of developing a student-based accounting system.
11. Develop an improved definition of dropouts taking into consideration the alternative methods of completing school and those students with an interrupted education.
12. Continue to cooperatively develop well articulated programs between the public secondary schools and the Community College institutions.

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APPENDIX G

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION
STATE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
RALEIGH 27611



February 1, 1980

Dr. Jerome Melton
Deputy State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
Education Building
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Dr. Melton:

The Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Public School Dropouts hereby encourages the Department of Public Instruction to implement the following recommendations concerning programs to aid in reduction of the number of students leaving school prior to obtaining a high school diploma:

- (1) To carefully study the current statistical method of counting dropouts and consider the practicality of developing a student-base accounting system.
- (2) To develop an improved definition of dropouts taking into consideration the alternative methods of completing school and those students with an interrupted education.
- (3) To continue the practice of cooperative development of well-articulated programs between the public secondary schools and the community college institutions.
- (4) To develop a proper format for the exit interview and to encourage each school to provide each potential dropout with an exit interview.

In addition, the Committee has tentatively decided to make the following recommendations to the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980):

Dr. Melton
Page two
February 1, 1980

- (1) That funds be made available to provide one elementary guidance counselor in every elementary school in North Carolina.
- (2) That funds be made available to reduce the student-teacher ratio in the basic skills in grades 4 through 5 to strengthen the instructional program.
- (3) That funds be made available to provide two days for staff development at the beginning of the school term prior to commencement of classes.
- (4) That funds be made available to provide one extended day program in each local school administrative unit.

The Committee would like to know as soon as possible the cost of implementing each of the tentative recommendations to the 1979 General Assembly (Second Session, 1980).

Please notify us if you have any difficulty in fulfilling the request.

Sincerely,

Dallas L. Alford, Jr., Cochairman
LRC Committee on Public School
Dropouts

Gordon H. Greenwood, Cochairman
LRC Committee on Public School
Dropouts

APPENDIX H



State of North Carolina

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Raleigh 27611

JEROME H. MELTON
DEPUTY
SUPERINTENDENT

RAIG PHILLIPS
SUPERINTENDENT

February 26, 1980

TO: Senator Dallas L. Alford and
Representative Gordon H. Greenwood
Chairmen, LRC Committee on Public School Dropouts

FROM: Jerome H. Melton JHM

SUBJ: Request for Budget Information

As requested in your recent letter I am providing you with the following information:

1. In order to provide one elementary school counselor in each elementary school in North Carolina, an additional 1,129 counselors would be needed. At a projected cost of \$16,212 per position, this would require \$18,303,248 for the 1980-81 school year.

It is our opinion that most school systems would prefer additional counselors at the secondary level until a more realistic counselor/pupil ratio is obtained at that level.

2. In order to change the teacher allocation for grades 4-6 from 1:30 to 1:26, an additional 1,384 teachers would be needed for the 1980-81 school year. It is projected that this would require approximately \$22,500,000.

Due to peculiarities in sizes of schools, school organizational patterns, and other factors, it is difficult to determine the exact number of teachers required in grades 4-6 to accomplish a ratio of 1:26 only in the areas of reading-language arts and mathematics. It is our best estimate that this would require about two-thirds of the number shown above or 923 teachers at a cost of approximately \$15,000,000.

3. Concerning a two-day staff development requirement at the beginning of the school year, it should be noted that teachers are now employed for 200 days each year. The two days requested for staff development are now possible at no additional cost to the State. Most school systems are using two or more of these days for this purpose.
4. In order to have a state supported extended school day program in all local school systems, an additional 84 programs would be required for next school year. The total cost for each of these programs including

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Memo to Senator Alford and Representative Greenwood
February 26, 1980

one 12-month vocational position at \$14,721, one 10-month regular position at \$16,212, and \$10,000 for materials, supplies, etc. would be \$40,933. This cost times the 84 units not having programs would require \$3,438,000 in additional funds for the 1980-81 school year.

The State Board of Education is meeting on March 4 for the purpose of identifying budget requests for the 1981-83 biennium. It is anticipated that the Board will also identify at that time any budget requests it wishes to make to the short session of the General Assembly.

We appreciate your continued interest in the public schools and your special interest in providing additional resources to reduce the number of students dropping out of school prior to graduation.

If we may provide you with any additional information or assist your committee in any way, please let me know.

JHM:JTB/jd

APPENDIX I

EXPANSION BUDGET 1981-83

Introduction

The concept of a free and appropriate education for every child is unique to America. Although the basic concept is as old as the Republic, it is a particularly high priority with North Carolinians. The North Carolina State Constitution declares it to be the duty of the State to provide "a uniform system of free public schools... wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students. The people have a right to the privilege of education and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right." In 1931 the State Legislature manifested this commitment by assuming the responsibility for financing public schools, and since that time has provided funding for between 63 and 87 percent of the operational costs. In more recent years the commitment has been expanded with the recognition of the rights of exceptional children as reflected in the Creech Legislation.

The belief in, and the commitment to a free, appropriate education for every child has greatly benefited North Carolina. The educational level of the State's citizens has increased from 8.9 years in 1960 to 10.6 years in 1970 with corresponding increases in the per capita income from \$1,037 in 1950 to \$5,916 in 1977. The relationship of education and economic growth is clear. Forecasts for the growth of North Carolina's economy indicate the need for continued improvements in the education of our citizens to produce trained, capable workers. Since over 95 percent of North Carolina's youth receive their education and training in the public schools, it is essential that the school system respond to this challenge. The school program must provide a well-rounded experience which will challenge students to remain in school from grades K-12 and which will prepare the high school graduate for further education and future work.

Although education is important for economic growth, decision-makers must also be concerned about the total development of each young person. Preparation for effective citizenship; development of wholesome attitudes; appreciation for the arts; improved health and worthy use of leisure time are important elements of the good life and must be addressed by the public schools. Education is a life-long process including the mastery of basic academic skills in reading, oral and written communication, mathematical computation and citizenship, as well as the development of work skills. In a complex technical society, these aspects of preparation become inseparable so that the importance of work skills in the secondary school program increases.

These issues confirm the important linkage between our public school programs and the broader thrusts of economic, social, and cultural development. We cannot have one without the other, and the challenge to the State Board of Education and the Legislature is to assure that the educational component is sufficient for and attuned to the times. (See attachment #1)

Background

Financing the education of the approximately 1,156,000 public school children in North Carolina is big business. While the total amount of funding seems high due to the large number of students, a more accurate view comes from analysis on a per pupil basis. In 1978-79, the total per pupil cost was \$1,487 which is \$277 per pupil less than the national average of \$1,764 per student. Of the total expenditure of \$1,487, the State invested \$935; local government contributed \$359 and \$193 came from federal funds. The investment by local governments in 1978-79, 58.7 percent of which went for non-instructional costs, is an increase from about \$20 per pupil in 1950. The federal per pupil expenditure for 1978-79 was approximately \$193. Of this amount, 37.9 percent went to handicapped and disadvantaged children; another 5.2 percent went to vocational education. The federal contribution to the general program is minimal except for the local units that receive impact aid.

Comparing the \$935 that the State spent for each public elementary and secondary student in 1978-79, \$1,173 was provided for each community college student and \$2,934 was provided for each student in a four-year post-secondary institution. Not only does the State provide a higher level of support to Community Colleges and four-year institutions, but the percent contributed by the State is much higher. Of the total per pupil cost, the State provides about 87 percent for the community college student, around 79 percent for the student attending a four-year state supported university, but less than 63 percent of cost of educating an elementary or secondary student in the public schools.

Impact of Inflation and Energy Costs

During 1979 we experienced an inflation rate of 13.3 percent. The inflation rate for non-electric energy related costs was even higher, increasing at an estimated annual rate of 56.5 percent. It has been forecasted by many economists that the rate of inflation, including energy costs, will be 10 percent per year or more through 1983. Thus, to hold our own in net dollars, the expenditure per pupil must increase from the 1978-79 level of \$1,487 to \$2,177 in 1982-83. This alone, based on projected enrollment estimates, will require \$700,000,000 in new funds.

Major Program Issues in This Budget

The need of every child for a sound, thorough background in the skills of reading, communication, and mathematics has never been greater. Because effective citizenship, success in continuing educational pursuits and employment opportunities require it, a strong background in the basic skills is of particular importance to the children in North Carolina. In 1970, over 60 percent of North Carolina citizens aged twenty-five and older had not completed a high school education; more than one in four, or 28 percent of North Carolina citizens over twenty-five have less than an eighth grade education. North Carolina ranked tenth in industrial and economic development and is destined to climb higher. A literate and educated citizenry is needed to fill the skilled jobs coming to North Carolina.

During the 70's, North Carolina made a dramatic move to enhance opportunities for its young children in the basic skill areas. Provision for kindergarten and the primary reading program has resulted in strong achievement in the basic skills by young children. Standardized test scores in reading and mathematics place these children near or above national averages. However, similar test results show weaknesses in grades four through nine.

Data on school dropouts continue to indicate that a lack of competence in the basic skills is a major contributor to the high dropout rate and failure in the high schools. Furthermore, achievement in basic skills correlates very closely with school attendance and both factors correlate inversely with school dropouts. Statistics show good attendance to be positively correlated with high achievement. Students who drop out of school often show a history of poor school attendance. (Serious discipline problems also correlate strongly with poor attendance.) State funding is provided on the basis of student membership and the cost effectiveness of the investment is dependent on a high rate of student attendance. When children are absent, they miss opportunities made available by the taxpayers. Absent students receive no benefits and when they return to school, teachers must do a certain amount of re-teaching. Thus, children who are absent tax the investment twice and cost the State more for a day missed than one in attendance.

Approximately 30,000 children drop out of school each year in North Carolina. Only about 72 percent of the youths in the ninth grade in 1975-76 graduated from high school in 1978-79. Many school children face conditions both in school and during non-school hours which keep them from doing as well as they could. For example, 9 to 15 percent of our school children have physical and mental handicaps; 10 to 20 percent come from home conditions where the standard of living is below the poverty level. A similar percentage of your youth have serious problems adjusting to the formal social structure in a school setting. While statistics on such problems are difficult to come by, there is evidence that programs with certain characteristics do improve attendance and behavior, keep children in school, and increase achievement. Such programs include extended day, in-school suspension, modified programs and class size, and concentration of counseling services. These programs all have certain characteristics in common: (1) small enough groups to permit individual attention; (2) home-school communication and cooperation; (3) concentration on specifically identified needs with strong emphasis given to motivating students; and (4) modification of the instructional program so as to cause the experiences to have practical meaning for the child.

The quality of the program offered children, while hard to quantify, determines the results for each child. While statistics are not available to substantiate each aspect, experience with the Annual and Competency Testing Programs, the Remediation Program, the development of an individual education plan for each exceptional child, and the Primary Reading Program confirms that the quality of instruction and achievement of children are directly related to the following:

- (1) a well-defined, structured program;
- (2) trained, competent, dedicated leadership and teachers;
- (3) a student/staff ratio small enough to assure some individual attention;
- (4) adequate and diversified materials for use by the teacher and children;
- (5) involvement of the parents and community in the teaching-learning process; and
- (6) an evaluation system that monitors results and provides practical information on each child for teachers, parents, and decision-makers.

While providing programs that assure high achievement in the basic skill areas and keep children in school are of highest priority, and while preparing youth to become effective citizens and productive workers is a crucial part of economic development, decision-makers cannot afford to forget the need for children to be exposed to and experience success in a broadly based, enriched and diversified school curriculum. School is life to children. Just as adults need self-fulfilling experiences to be happy, productive citizens, so must children. Thus, the school environment must assure that every child experiences the arts, acquires social skills and is exposed to instruction in the sciences, health and physical education. While the quality of instructional programs in the basic areas varies somewhat from school to school, the variation in opportunities in the arts, foreign languages, counseling services, and wholesome health and physical education are much greater. A recent study brought to light that provisions of these opportunities is largely dependent on local funding. Such funding varies widely from one school unit to another. In 1978-79, the per pupil expenditure from local funds varied by as much as \$700 per pupil. Much of this local funding, where available, is used to provide instruction in these areas. In units where it is not available, such instruction is not available. (see attachment #1A)

Relationship of Current Budget to Priority Needs

The 1978-79 operational expenditures for public schools from all sources was \$1,718,066,186. This provides a per pupil investment of \$1,487. The State portion of this, \$1,080,900,506, provides the following:

- a teacher and aide for each 26 children in grades K-3,
- a teacher for each 30 children in grades 4-6,
- a teacher for each 31 children in grades 7-12,
- instructional materials funds at \$13 per child in grades 4-12 and \$19 in grades K-3,
- free textbooks in grades K-8 and \$8 per child in grades 9-12,
- a superintendent for each administrative unit,

- a principal for each school,
- a librarian, guidance counselor, assistant principal, attendance counselor, a school nurse, or social worker for each 264 students,
- a per pupil amount of about \$9 for clerical help at school and unit levels,
- a per pupil amount of about \$35 for utilities, custodial services, fuel, etc., and
- a per pupil amount of about \$78 for transportation.

In addition, each exceptional child had \$552 spent on him/her from State funds in 1979-80. Each child enrolled in vocational education had an additional allocation of \$229 in 1978-79. Each child receiving remediation had an additional state expenditure of \$161 in 1978-79. (See attachment #2)

Federal funds of \$222,641,578 provided an additional per pupil expenditure of \$65 for exceptional children, \$10 for vocational education students and \$87 per child for school food services. Most federal funds are highly categorical, targeted for specifically identified groups of children and, in the case of instruction, must be spent on top of the state and locally funded programs. The exception to this is federal impact aid which 75 local units receive in varying amounts. (See attachments #3, 4, 5, 6)

Local current operations expenditures amounted to \$414,524,103 or \$359 per pupil in 1978-79. The local per pupil amount varies by as much as \$700 from unit to unit. These funds were used in 1978-79 in the following significant areas: (1) extra teachers--27.4 percent; (2) maintenance of buildings and equipment--11.7 percent; and plant operation--13.5 percent.

There is little or no relation between state funding and local funding for the public schools. Local funds may be used without regard to state funding with few exceptions.

Relationship of Expansion Budget to Priority Needs

I. Basic Skills (See attachment #7)

Provisions of kindergarten and primary reading programs for all children in K-3 have resulted in excellent progress in basic skills achievement for these children. The State assessment of 1973, using standardized achievement tests, showed these children behind in reading and math by 6 months. Similar tests administered in 1979 indicate that similar children are performing at or above grade level. The teachers in K-3 provide sufficient personnel to significantly reduce class size, with sufficient funds for instructional materials and training for teachers. While the allotment in K-3 is 26 with a full-time teacher aide along with the teacher, the allotment in grades 4-6 is 30 and in grades 7-12 it is 31. No aides are provided. Funds for materials and training are very limited. State assessment and annual test results show a serious decline in achievement of children in these grades in the basic skills as they progress up the grade span. It is proposed that we attack this priority need by one or more of the following strategies:

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. Provide teacher allotment ratio of 1:26, grades 4-6.	\$ 22,758,112	\$ 22,302,410
2. Allot teacher aides on the basis of one aide for each 4th grade class in 1981-82 and each 5th grade class in 1982-83.	21,191,456	41,470,870
3. Provide teacher allotment ratio in Reading/Language Arts and Math of 1:25-daily student load of 125-grades 7-12.	25,704,499	25,387,923
4. Reduce dropouts by expanding basic skills instruction for low achievers, grades 9-12.	19,399,910	18,763,585
5. Staff development for Reading/Language Arts/Math teachers, grades 4-12.	616,290	1,705,582
6. Exceptional Children (See attachment #2A)	45,352,454	75,445,800
7. Research and evaluate basic skills program, grades 4-12.	139,000	139,000
8. Increase instructional materials and supplies from \$13.50 to \$19.50 per ADM, grades 4-12 in 1981-82; \$19.50 to \$25, K-12 in 1982-83.	4,741,794	10,807,145
9. Increase textbook allotment, grades 9-12, from \$8 to \$15 per ADM and from \$45 to \$55 per student for student increases.	2,366,612	2,303,654
Total	<u>\$142,270,127</u>	<u>\$198,331,969</u>

II. Keeping Children in School (See attachment #8)

The annual dropout rate is approximately 7 percent. This means that approximately 28 percent of the children who enroll in high school do not finish. The daily rate of absences from school each day is approximately 7 percent. This runs as high as 30 percent with the lowest quartile of achievers. The correlation between poor attendance and dropouts is almost 100 percent. There are heavy correlations between and among these variables and crime, drug addiction, unemployment, and welfare. If we are to succeed in teaching the basic skills to all children, we must reduce dropouts and improve attendance. The following thrusts are proposed to address this priority need:

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. Allot instructional support personnel on the basis of 1:200 ADM for librarians, guidance counselors, assistant principals, attendance counselors, social workers, nurses, etc.	\$ 20,082,534	\$ 19,108,244

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
2. Demonstration sites for successful, alternative programs in basic skills, dropout reduction and increased attendance.	\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000
3. \$10 per ADM to support and administer student activities program, grades 7-12.	<u>5,152,670</u>	<u>5,134,180</u>
Total	<u>\$ 25,635,204</u>	<u>\$ 24,642,404</u>

III. Balanced Program

Citizens expect children to excel in a well-rounded way as they grow into adulthood. Modern society demands well-rounded citizens. Such development comes to children through training and experience. The public school system must provide this comprehensiveness. It comes through courses and learning experiences in the arts, languages, sciences, and health and physical education, and through a variety of other experiences and activities. Such programs require adequate materials and trained personnel. A recent study indicates that the availability of such courses, materials, and training is directly related to the amount of local funding made available. Yet, the need for such balance and quality is as great in those communities not providing adequate local funding as it is in school systems that do provide these experiences and activities from local funds.

To provide greater balance in the school offerings, it is proposed that the following resources be requested:

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. \$1 per ADM to improve cultural arts education, grades K-6.	\$ 598,709	\$ 589,373
2. \$1 per ADM to improve health, safety, and physical education, grades K-6.	598,709	589,373
3. \$1 per ADM to improve science education, grades K-6.	598,709	589,373
4. Allocate \$5 per ADM K-12 for instructional equipment.	<u>5,581,450</u>	<u>5,513,955</u>
Total	<u>\$ 7,377,577</u>	<u>\$ 7,282,074</u>

IV. Effective and Contributing Citizenship

Much is currently written in the press about effective citizenship. The low percentage of participants in our elective process, the minimum knowledge level of average citizens about our governmental and judicial processes, our economic system, and world affairs are value judgments assessed by the news media. Suffice it to say that our youth need strong training in these areas. It is equally important that they be prepared for participation in successful careers and work,

that they understand and appreciate the work ethic, and that they be prepared for active and wholesome adult life. It is recommended that the following thrusts be included in the expansion budget:

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. 447.5 new vocational teachers each year of biennium to serve 42,500 additional students each year, grades 7-12, 5 percent increased reimbursement rate each year and support for equipment and materials.	\$ 11,715,601	\$ 24,182,909
2. Provide 16 new LEA Health Coordinators each year of biennium, health education curriculum guides and materials, and staff development activities for coordinators.	423,064	835,904
3. Economics education curriculum guides and materials for each school.	42,600	460,800
4. Economics education staff development activities for teachers and supervisors.	175,451	216,000
5. Community Schools--establish 29 LEA projects @ \$25,000 not now funded; \$1 per ADM to all LEAs (includes 5 percent--\$90,697 for state administration).	1,904,642	2,264,642
Total	\$ 14,261,358	\$ 27,960,255

V. Operational Support and Effective Management (See attachment #9)

The public school system is big business. Like any business, it requires adequate support and management. Cost-effective operations require that these minimum management and support services be available and used. The per pupil investment in administration in the current budget is \$36. Expanding responsibilities of schools and inflation and cost increases require additional resources:

A. Local

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. Allocation of positions for administrators, directors, coordinators, supervisors, etc., in central office to offset loss of leadership personnel due to declining enrollments.		
a. 1 position per 1,500 ADM with a minimum of 1 position per LEA	\$ 10,564,203	\$ 10,620,07
b. 1 position per 1,500 ADM up to 6,000 ADM, 1 position per 2,000 ADM from 6,001-12,000 ADM, 1 position for each additional 2,500 ADM.	7,658,398	7,698,87

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
2. Full funding of leadership position for maintenance and custodial operations.	\$ 1,732,962	\$ 1,733,449
3. Allot custodians on basis of .35 months of employment for each 10 ADM.	2,902,815	2,520,072
4. Allot clerical assistants on basis of one month of employment for each 45 ADM.	469,433	249,355
5. Fund non-certified employees-teacher aides, office support personnel, custodians-to midpoint of state salary schedule.	11,590,132	11,592,134
6. Allot an average of \$100 per state paid public school employee for on-the-job training and improvement /1/:	5,500,000	5,500,000
7. School Bus Transportation		
Gasoline increases	23,800,000	31,800,000
Parts, tires, etc.	813,699	947,013
Bus drivers' salary increases	7,081,236	10,621,895
Contract transportation increases	1,369,812	1,369,812
School bus replacement	2,145,935	2,920,412
8. Plant Operation		
Fuel increases	8,316,018	12,692,762
9. Additional funds to meet mandated matching requirements for School Food Services.	1,838,734	2,850,354
	(option 1.a)	\$ 95,417,328
	(option 1.b)	\$ 92,496,127

TOTAL

B. State Level Costs

<u>New</u>		
<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
1. Pupil Personnel--1 health consultant	\$ 24,468	\$ 23,556
2. Personnel Relations--4 personnel management consultants	102,706	99,060
3. Research--1 consultant, 1 secretary	39,657	37,813
4. Educational Media--6 regional coordinators, 4 secretaries	224,684	204,254

/1/: This amount is needed in addition to current staff development funds to provide an average of \$100.

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
5. Economics Education--6 regional coordinators, 4 secretaries	224,684	204,254
6. Language Arts Remediation--2 regional coordinators, 1 secretary	66,648	63,992
7. Languages--1 speech consultant	24,468	23,556
8. Science--6 regional coordinators, 4 secretaries	224,684	204,254
9. Quality Assurance Program--1 consultant, 1 secretary	39,657	37,813
10. Plant Operation--8 regional consulting engineers, 4 clerk-typists	244,714	233,687
11. Financial Services--8 regional systems accountants, 4 clerk-typists	276,952	265,932
12. Administrative Services--1 computer systems analyst, 1 program analyst, 1 computer consultant, 1 additional computer consultant in 1982-83	101,296	125,450
<u>To Replace Federal or State Funds</u>		
13. School Planning--2 consultants, 1 drafting technician, 1 secretary	-0-	85,810
14. Development--4 consultants	121,032	121,050
15. Research--4 secretaries	45,569	45,576
16. Science--1 energy consultant, 1 half-time secretary	28,414	28,418
17. Committee Travel	80,000	-0-
18. Miscellaneous Costs		
Quality Assurance	2,171,548	910,000
Teacher Education	48,000	84,000
Educational Media - Video Duplication	101,500	8,000
Educational Media Van and Display Shelving	14,840	-0-
Research Centers - Computer Terminals	39,600	10,800
Agency Services - Replacement Van	9,000	-0-
19. Inflationary Cost Increases:		
<u>Public Instruction</u>		
Association Dues	10,000	10,000
Office Supplies	50,000	50,000

<u>Description</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>
Travel	300,000	300,000
Postage	10,000	10,000
Printing	37,500	37,500
Telephone	15,000	15,000
 <u>Controller's Office</u>		
Association Dues	2,000	2,000
Office Supplies	15,000	15,000
Travel	46,700	46,700
Postage	7,500	7,500
Printing	20,000	20,000
Telephone	10,000	10,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total State Level Cost	\$ 4,777,821	\$ 3,340,975
	<hr/>	<hr/>
GRAND TOTAL (A) ¹	<u>\$272,447,066</u>	<u>\$356,975,005</u>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
GRAND TOTAL (B) ²	<u>\$269,541,261</u>	<u>\$354,053,804</u>
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¹ This figure includes option 1.a under Section V. Operational Support and Effective Management, page 9.

² This figure includes option 1.b under Section V. Operational Support and Effective Management, page 9.

APPENDIX J



INTRODUCED BY

Referred to

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR
REDUCTION OF THE TEACHER-PUPIL RATIO IN GRADES 4 - 6.

Whereas, ratified House Bill 409 of the 1979 General
Assembly (First Session, 1979) authorized the Legislative
Research Commission to study the problem of public school dropouts
in North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Legislative Research Commission establish-
ed the Committee on Public School Dropouts to carry out the
authorization of ratified House Bill 409; and

Whereas, the Committee has concluded that the pupils
attending the public schools in North Carolina begin to show a
decline in achievement in the basic skills in grades 4-6 as
evidenced by standardized tests results; and

Whereas, the Committee has concluded that a reduction
in the teacher-pupil ratio would have a positive effect on this
problem; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. There is appropriated to the State Board
of Education the sum of twenty-two million, five hundred thousand
dollars (\$22,500,000) to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio from
1:30 to 1:26 in grades 4-6 in the public schools of the State.

Sec. 2. This act is effective upon ratification.

APPENDIX K

INTRODUCED BY

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
3 TO MAKE AVAILABLE AN EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM TO EACH
4 LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT.

5 Whereas, ratified House Bill 409 of the 1979 General
6 Assembly (First Session, 1979) authorized the Legislative
7 Research Commission to study the problem of public school dropouts
8 in North Carolina; and

9 Whereas, the Legislative Research Commission established
10 the Committee on Public School Dropouts to conduct the study
11 authorized by ratified House Bill 409; and

12 Whereas, the Committee has concluded that the Extended
13 School Day Program is the most effective program, in retaining
14 the potential dropout and recovering students who have already
15 dropped out, being operated in the public school system of the
16 State; and

17 Whereas, the Committee has been informed that 84 local
18 school administrative units are not operating extended school
19 day programs; Now, therefore,
20 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

21 Section 1. There is appropriated to the State Board
22 of Education the sum of three million, four hundred thirty-eight
23 thousand dollars (\$3,438,000) to provide 84 additional Extended
24 School Day Programs to make an Extended School Day Program

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1 available to each local school administrative unit.

2 Sec. 2. This act is effective upon ratification.

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